

**File No. 9110032**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**FIREFIGHTER ROBERT SALVADOR**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria**

R. Salvador

MR. MURAD: Today is September 10, 2001.

My name is Murray Murad with Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department. We are here today to conduct an interview with Firefighter --

A. Robert Salvador, firefighter first grade.

I am assigned to Engine Company 28 and I was the chauffeur that day.

Q. We are currently at Engine 28 in the borough of Manhattan and firefighter Salvador, can you please describe that day, that tragedy on September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center?

A. The first time the alarm came in was at approximately 8:50. I responded by the FDR drive, which was a clear shot to the World Trade Center. We went through the tunnel, came out --

Q. The time now is 1110 hours at this time. Firefighter Salvador will now continue.

A. I responded and I came out on West Street and the police escorted -- didn't escort me in, but directed me straight in. I was one of the first arriving units at the second alarm. I arrived at this site at around 905. Varied. 905, 902. I had

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seen -- on the FDR drive we observed like five floors of fire, visible fire on I guess that is the north tower. So we knew there was a fire evidently. I dropped the rest of the members off in front of 2 World Trade Center. That's the north tower, I assume. There were three rigs -- three truck companies and three Engine Companies in front of 2 World Trade Center.

Q. Were you able to identify any units that were there or you just saw the apparatus?

A. I just seen the apparatus, because I was still in awe at that time. My first response was get a working hydrant and some supply to number 2 World Trade Center. In front of the building there were no hydrants to be had, because three rigs already had the three hydrants in front. So I made a turn on Vesey Street going east and I stopped by 7 World Trade Center where the second plane had just hit the first tower. I guess that's number 1 World Trade Center, that's the south tower, and a numerous amount of police and other people, emergency people jumped on the rig and directed me to go underneath the skyway. I stayed underneath the skyway after the plane had hit and lots of debris had fallen into

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the street.

So they got off the rig after the debris had stopped falling on the block. I turned on West Street and there was a hydrant right off the corner of Vesey and West. I hooked up to the hydrant there, tested the hydrant, hooked up, stretched to number 2 World Trade Center and I supplied water at that time. And I was witness to many jumpers jumping. It still affects me.

Q. That's fine.

A. I mean that's -- I still can't sleep at night. I stayed with the rig. I was supplying the building. I seen 4 Engine was on my side too. 21 truck -- 21 Engine had pulled up, I'd say, approximately 9:30. That was Captain Burke, Billy Burke was in the firehouse and he had mentioned to me, he says, "Whatever cylinders you have left we'll take" and they proceeded in the building. 21 Engine had made a left on Vesey and proceeded up towards Church. The chauffeur, 4 Engine chauffeur and I were monitoring our rigs and then I missed -- 4 chauffeur had left me and I was standing there alone and I witnessed the first building collapsing and I was watching it and I couldn't believe it was

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collapsing. I thought it was just, you know,  
explosions. All the windows were blowing out.

By that time I noticed that it was mushrooming  
and I knew then it was collapsing, so I started to  
run and the concussion picked me up and threw me  
30 feet and I fell on my back, right near two parked  
cars. I turned around toward the wall and the cloud  
was right on top of me. So I crawled underneath two  
parked cars and that was it for me.

Afterwards a cloud blew passed me with a huge  
amount of heat. I was rattled, shaken and I got up.  
I couldn't see anything. It was total blackout. I  
made myself -- I found my way to the wall of  
building 7 and I started working my way north along  
the building and I found maybe two civilians on the  
floor. We all held hands and we tried to make our  
way towards Barclay. On our way to Barclay I seen  
another DEP agent. He was crouched over a car. I  
picked him up and we proceeded towards Barclay again  
and I heard cries out from a building across the  
street and they were telling me "anybody out here?  
Over here." And I just followed the voices and I  
made it to that building with the civilians and we  
stayed in the building. I made it to the bathroom.

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I had to clean my face and clean my eyes. My eyes were burning. My throat -- I thought I was having a heart attack. We stayed in the building for approximately 20 minutes, 25 minutes. I came back out.

It was still a very hazy situation. I walked back to my rig. The concussion knocked my rig out. So I took it out of pumps. I was trying to restart the rig to put it back in pumps when the second building started to come down. I ran across the street and I was going to make it into the federal building, but I couldn't. It was right on top of me so I just kneeled into the wall and put my turnout coat over my head. A fire ball went down that block. It was the hottest thing I ever felt in my life. I thought my hair, my ears, my face was melting. It was that hot. I crawled on the floor. There was no oxygen. It took all of the oxygen out of air. So I went in my turn out coat and got a breath of air in my armpit and I scrambled on the floor and I was praying -- I was saying my prayers and I found a little opening and it was in a doorway and a Port Authority cop had reached out and grabbed me and as he was pulling me in the doors blew in and

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we went down the stairs and I was in shock then. I  
was just lucky to get out of there.

Q. Did you guys have any communications? Did  
you have a radio?

A. I had a radio. The first part of the  
collapse I heard transmissions. I heard maydays, I  
heard a numerous amount of maydays and then  
transmissions stopped. I heard maydays I mean  
constantly when it was coming down and then all the  
transmissions stopped.

Q. Which channel were you operating on?  
Channel 1?

A. On channel 1.

Q. At any time did you hear anybody say  
switch to a certain channel frequency?

A. Yes, I did. I heard, "Chiefs, all command  
chiefs or commanders, please switch to channel" -- I  
forgot what channel they had mentioned. More  
direction. I heard that. I still remained on  
channel 1.

Q. On the diagram, can you just show me where  
the rig was and then the final resting place after  
the implosions and everything.

A. I turned on West Street, right on the

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corner of -- the west side of the street, right near  
building 7, off the corner of Vesey. I came up  
Vesey and turned here on West Street and there was a  
hydrant right there and I stretched from there to  
building 1.

Q. You were where? Where was your place  
after the second collapse?

A. I was still at the rig.

Q. Were still at the rig?

A. I was still at the rig.

Q. The Port Authority cop, where was he?

A. In the federal building. There was an  
opening right here (indicating) in the middle of the  
building.

So I made it across the street here and  
from there I just crawled as fast as I could.

MR. MURAD: I would like to thank you,  
Firefighter Salvador for this interview.

The time now is 1120 hours. This now  
concludes this portion of the interview.

Thank you very much.

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MR. MURAD: It is 11:25 now. It is  
October 10, 2001. We are going to reopen and



R. Salvador  
continue with the interview with firefighter  
Salvador. Additional information is to be  
recorded by Firefighter Salvador at this time  
regarding the operation at the World Trade  
Center.

A. Observing, before the first building had  
collapsed, I observed a few Chiefs and a numerous  
amount of firemen and EMT workers above on the  
skyway in between building 5 and building 1 I assume  
that is. When the first building was coming down, I  
looked, I noticed they were all standing there  
looking up and when I noticed it was coming down and  
the cloud just enveloped them. I mean they were  
there and then they weren't. And that's all I  
remember from that. I turned around and I got  
thrown 30 feet in the air.

Q. I know the conditions were very poor  
visibility wise and everything, but did you  
recognize anybody that was on the walkway?

A. No, I didn't recognize anybody, but I  
recognized two Chiefs -- at least two Chiefs and a  
numerous amount of firemen. It was about maybe  
eight firemen. Eight firemen and EMT workers, some  
Port Authority Police. I mean there was about 15,

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20 people up there. They were working towards building 1 at the time in the skyway, but we had a lot of jumpers and they were -- I guess they were going to render assistance to them. I don't know what they were going to do and when the building came down they were all like -- they backed up against the fence and that's the last I seen them, because the cloud enveloped them.

MR. MURAD: Okay. This concludes the interview with firefighter Salvador at this time. Thank you very much.